

Shelley, in his quest for the material for a new work of fiction. But it would almost appear as if now that he had become a good Conservative something in the depths of his passionate and romantic nature revolted against the dominion of a prosaic political creed and an uninspiring leader ; so that he felt impelled to demonstrate that, though he had submitted himself to the yoke of a definite political allegiance, his thoughts were not therefore to be bounded by the Tamworth manifesto. By choosing as his heroes the two greatest revolutionary figures that England had produced he made proclamation in no uncertain tones that as an artist at all events he was determined to retain his freedom and not to bow down before the idols of the Philistines. As one¹ of the best and most appreciative critics of the book has said, ' a waft of liberty flutters through its pages.'

In the complete absence of direct political motive *Vene-tia* resembles *Henrietta Temple*, and it is peculiar, among Disraeli's novels, in the comparative absence also of reflexions of his own personality or drafts from his own personal experience ; unless indeed we are to see in Cadurcis, who stands in the book for Byron, something of Disraeli himself. The idea is by no means fanciful. Disraeli had grown to manhood, as we have seen, in an atmosphere where reverence for Byron was almost a religion, and to him, even more than to most of the aspiring youth of the day, Byron had been an inspiration and a model. Many also as are the obvious differences between the two men they had a certain natural affinity of character and genius, alike in their strength and in their weakness. There is something in both of the same daemonic force, the same devouring ambition, the same self-idolatry, the same disposition to coxcombry and affectation; and in the wayward childhood and tempestuous career of Cadurcis we are not infrequently reminded of Disraeli

¹ Dr. Georg Brandes in his *Study of Lord Beaconsfield*, p. 152.